

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 06618 291643Z

11
ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: COMMUTATION OF DEATH SENTENCES FOR JUNTA TRIO STILL
LIVELY TOPIC

REF: A. ATHENS 6513; B. ATHENS 6490; C. THESSALONIKI 0514
D. ATHENS 6214

1. THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO COMMUTE THE DEATH
SENTENCES FOR FORMER JUNTA STALWARTS PAPADOPOULOS, PATTAKOS
AND MAKAREZOS REMAINS A HOT ISSUE IN GREEK POLITICAL CIRCLES.
THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE ATTEMPTING TO KEEP THE ISSUE
ALIVE THROUGH CONTINUED CRITICISM. THE GOG, OF COURSE,
SEEKS TO DOWNPLAY THE INCIDENT AND ISSUED A TERSE
STATEMENT ON AUGUST 28 SAYING THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT
INTEND TO BE DRAWN INTO FURTHER DEBATE ON THE MATTER.

2. AS IF TESTING THE WATERS, AS WELL, PERHAPS, AS THE
GOVERNMENT'S RESOLVE, THE AUGUST 28 AFTERNOON EDITION OF
PASOK-SUPPORTING ATHINAIKI DARED TO PRINT THE PREVIOUSLY
BANNED PAPADOPOULOS STATEMENT (REF D) WHICH WAS ALSO
REPRINTED THE NEXT DAY IN RIGHT-WING, JUNTA APOLOGIST
ELEFTHEROS COSMOS. SO FAR THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 06618 291643Z

GOVERNMENT RETRIBUTION IN EITHER CASE.

3. WHILE FAR FROM UNITED IN THEIR APPROACH, THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE CONTINUED TO LAMBAST THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS DECISION TO COMMUTE THE DEATH PENALTIES OF THE JUNTA TRIO. IN HIS LATEST STATEMENT, PASOK LEADER ANDREAS PAPANDREOU LASHED OUT WITH A DIATRIBE AGAINST PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS PERSONALLY AS WELL AS HIS "JUNTAIST" GOVERNMENT, AGAIN CALLING FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND NEW ELECTIONS. THE CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES PARTY HAS BEEN PERSISTENT IN ITS CRITICISM, ALTHOUGH PARTY PRESIDENT GEORGE MAVROS HAS INDICATED HE WILL REFRAIN UNTIL NEXT MONDAY FROM SENDING HIS MUCH PUBLICIZED LETTER TO CARAMANLIS CALLING FOR A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR (KKE-INTERIOR), THROUGH ITS SECOND IN COMMAND, DEPUTY LEONIDAS KYRKOS, CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO REVERSE ITS POSITION ON THE COMMUTATION OF DEATH SENTENCES AND REITERATED HIS PARTY'S SUPPORT FOR A SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. HE ALSO REITERATED THE KKE-INTERIOR'S PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES TO EXAMINE THE PROBLEM OF "DE-JUNTAZATION". KYRKOS THEN LAMBASTED PAPANDREOU FOR WHAT HE CALLED THE LATTER'S DISRUPTIVE AND EXTREMIST STATEMENT.

4. IN RECENT DAYS, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN, OBVIOUSLY HOPING TO DEFUSE THE ISSUE, HAVE SOUGHT TO REMAIN PRETTY WELL OUT OF THE FRAY. WITH THE INTENT OF ENDING ANY FURTHER DIALOGUE ON THE MATTER A "GOVERNMENT SOURCE" STATED ON AUGUST 28 THAT "...BOTH IN THE PRESS AND IN THE BEHAVIOR OF CERTAIN OPPOSITION PARTIES A DANGEROUS IMPUDENCE HAS BEEN NOTED. THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO DENY FALSE REPORTS DAILY AND BY REPLYING TO EXPLOSIVE STATEMENTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE OF CRISIS. HOWEVER, IT EXPECTS THAT PUBLIC OPINION WILL REACT IN A HEALTHY WAY AGAINST THE DANGERS OF THIS IMPUDENCE."

5. DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF, IN A STATEMENT ON AUGUST 28 LAUDING THE GREEK FORCES PARTICIPATING IN THE "PTOLEMY" MILITARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 06618 291643Z

EXERCISE IN NORTHER GREECE, COMMENTED ON THE SUCCESS OF THE EXERCISE AND NOTED THAT "ABOVE ANYTHING ELSE, THIS IS AN ACHIEVEMENT WHICH IS DUE TO THE ABSOLUTE DEVOTION OF THE ARMED FORCES TO THEIR DUTY." (N.B. MILITARY DUTY AS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY.) THIS STATEMENT, COMBINED WITH AN EARLIER COMMENT BY THE MINISTER TO THE EFFECT THAT THE MILITARY SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF THE DEBATE ON THE QUESTION OF THE

COMMUTATION OF THE DEATH SENTENCES (REF C), PROMPTED
SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION TO CHARGE THERE WAS A
SPLIT IN THE GOVERNMENT SINCE OTHER
GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN (JUSTICE MINISTER STEFANAKIS AND
UNDER SECRETARY FOR PRESS AND INFORMATION LAMBRIAS) HAD
IMPLIED THAT THE COMMUTATIONS WERE NECESSARY TO AVOID ADVERSE
REACTIONS FROM ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES (REFTEL B).
A GOVERNMENT SOURCE WAS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AS SAYING NO SUCH
DIVISION EXISTED.
KUBISCH

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